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B. S. WILLIAMS, GENERAL AGENT,

Pensacola, Florida.

SOME

"FLORIDA INCIDENTS"

A Practical Joke That Became National—How a Florida Citizen Removed a United States Official.

By
Col. O. T. Green.
In the
Ocala Banner.

Of Captain Albert Willard many good stories are told.

Among others, I now recall one which happened shortly after the civil war when Willard was residing in Cedar Key. He was a good sailor and had commanded a steamer in the passenger trade between Havana and Cedar Key, but at that time was in the mercantile business at the latter point.

Three or four of his friends from the north came down on a visit to him and he took them on a cruise in a very handsome, staunch sail boat that he had, fishing and hunting along the Gulf coast, with which coast no man was better acquainted than he, being a thorough hunter and fisherman.

It happened that at that time An-

cloze light had a change of keepers, and the old keeper that had been there twenty years or more had, through a political deal, been removed and a new keeper established, who had been in the position about a week. The old keeper had removed with his family to the main land, about a mile away. Captain Willard landed at the lighthouse and telling the keeper that this was a board of lighthouse inspectors he proceeded to examine the lights, etc., and finally gave instructions to the keeper to come before the board on the main land for examination and trial.

Fired the Keeper.
The old keeper prepared a sumptuous repast under the great live oak

trees, and produced some of the finest of smuggled brandy, wine and cigars.

The new keeper came before the pseudo board, was examined at length and learnedly by the members thereof, was dismissed from his position as incompetent, and ordered to leave the lighthouse immediately, which he did, and the old lighthouse keeper was re-established.

Hoisting his sail, the captain was cruising down the coast when he noticed afar off a sail. On closer examination through his glasses he found out that she was a lighthouse tender. Turning to his friends the captain said:

"Boys, we are in trouble, and the best thing for me to do is to land you all on the island here, while I go in and find out what the results of this boat's trip is."

Now it happened that these same friends, a few years before, had taken their friend, the captain, with them to Niagara Falls, and carrying him under the water fall had suddenly extinguished the lights, and with the guides had left him there to two or three hours' solitude. The result of which joke had cost the captain many a bottle of champagne; and so the is-

land that he chose to maroon his friends on was a sandy island with a few piles of oyster shells to form high spots above high water, and a very few stunted trees, and—solitude.

Marooned the Party.
The captain sailed away, and that night ran into Cedar Key, hid his boat and proceeded to call on his friend, the collector of the port.

Here he found that his action had created a great furor. Orders had been received from the treasury department to capture him at any cost, whatever. The whole patrol of the Gulf coast had been ordered to be on the lookout for him, and the collector said to him:

"Captain, you have played the very devil this time, sure!"

After waiting a day or two for better information, the captain sailed back to his Robinson Crusoe friends and found, as he expected, that they had had experiences which more than compensated him for his trip under the waterfall. Between the deer flies, sand flies and mosquitoes their faces were hardly recognizable; but they were so glad to see the captain and get away from the island that they very shortly forgot all their troubles,

and the new dangers which the captain told them of were as nothing to those of the Devil's island which they had left behind, and as one of them stated, he "would rather spend ten years in the penitentiary than one more night in that cursed place."

Charged with Treason.
The captain took them to Cedar Key at night, locked them in a box car attached to a freight train, and supplied them with food and drink, and imposed the necessity of the greatest quiet upon them. The captain who had taken the engineer and train crew into his confidence, then went back and went to sleep in the caboose.

Arriving at Baldwin, Florida, near Jacksonville, the captain got together five or six of his old friends, and telling them that they must act as United States marshals, he had them seize his box car friends and lock them up as prisoners of the United States government, charged with treason, allowing no communication with the outside world.

He then proceeded to Jacksonville, and after an interview with his senior United States senator, made arrangements to go on to Washington with him. Before doing so, however, he went down to Baldwin and had a jail delivery, shipping his friends away to their northern homes, very much delighted with their escape from the toils of the law and Florida adventures.

Laughed it Off.
Arriving in Washington the captain with the Senator called on the assistant secretary of War, who was a very estimable gentleman. The senator introduced to the secretary his friend Captain Albert Willard of Florida. Jokingly the secretary said: "You are not the desperado of that name who is now being hunted for in Florida?" The captain assured the secretary that he was. He was very much astonished but after he had listened to the captain's story of the trial of the lighthouse keeper, of the plight and of the flight of his friends the secretary laid back and laughed and laughed and said he would have to see that he was forgiven, and this was done, but not until the captain had told the secretary of War, the head of the lighthouse department and the President, his story, which in his droll manner and inimitable style caused them to be convulsed with laughter and he was allowed to go thence warned never to repeat the offense.

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BIDS WANTED.
Bids for privileges at the A. O. H. Dewey Day Picnic, at Kupfrian's Park, May 1, should be mailed or handed to Frank Riera, at Forbes store. Right reserved to reject any or all bids. Bids will be opened Monday, April 24, at 7:30 p. m., at the A. O. H. hall. 19april4t.

PRACTICAL JOKE ONPHOSPHATE MAN

It was during the early days of the phosphate in Florida, and more or less skepticism existed as to whether there really was phosphate in the state or not. Colonel John Dunn, of Ocala, a very prominent man and banker, had satisfied himself of the reality of the mineral and had invested a large portion of his fortune in the enterprise. Among his friends in Ocala was quite a noted character, one of the pioneers of Ocala, a clever, delightful gentleman, Colonel Eichelberge, who still lives among us.

Now, Colonel Eichelberge conceived in his mind that his friend Dunn was acting very rashly, and without saying anything to anybody he took the train and went down to where are located the finest phosphate mines in the Withlacoochee valley, and from the pits in the land that Dunn had optioned and purchased, he took numerous samples, and as the schedule of the train was such that in order to find accommodations for the night he went on to Homosassa, and spent the night with his friend, Albert Willard, one of the most noted bonifaces in the state, whose famous old place, "The Homosassa Inn," has sheltered many of the most distinguished sportsmen of this country.

Captain Albert was a great wag, very fond of practical jokes and no respecter of persons and conditions, and as the wee sma' hours drew on and the bottle passed, the colonel disclosed to his friend, Albert, what his mission had been. He had taken samples of the phosphate rock and was going to have them analyzed so as to see whether or not his friend Dunn had ruined himself.

After Colonel Eichelberge had retired Captain Willard took the gunnysack in which the rocks were placed; emptied it of its contents and filled it up with pure lime-stone rocks.

The next morning Colonel Eichelberge returned to Ocala and in a few days, with a very long and serious face, called on his friend Dunn and showed him the analysis of the rock which he had had taken and very solemnly said:

"John, you are a ruined man," and then described what he had done.

Colonel Dunn was a very cool, level-headed man, and although he was at first startled by the earnestness of his friend, who he was satisfied was telling the truth, according to his light, commenced questioning him as to his doings, where he had been, etc.

As soon as the fact had developed that he had spent the night with Willard and had disclosed his mission to him, he was satisfied that a practical joke had been played, and going to the telegraph office in a few minutes had confirmed his impression, and informed Colonel Eichelberge that he had been the victim of a practical joke.

The language he used when this became plain to him was very fiery and emphatic; so much so that it was several months before Captain Albert came near enough to him to laugh the thing off.

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